CK-12 Foundation

Practice Composition Text

Bruno Gambrill

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Chapter 1

Expository Essay

1.1 Expository Essay

Learning Objectives

- Provide evidence that supports a thesis, including relevant information on varying perspectives.
- Articulate concepts and information from correctly and concisely.
- Decipher between the significance and merit of different facts, concepts, and data.
- Master the organization of an expository essay.

Introduction

The main aim of an expository essay is to provide an effective explanation of a topic. While a descriptive essay strives to describe a subject or a narrative essay seeks to show personal growth, an expository essay tries to explain a topic or situation. Thus, expository essays are written as if the writer is explaining or clarifying a topic to the reader. Since an expository essay is trying to clarify a topic, it is important that it provides the categories or reasons that support the clarification of the paper. Moreover, these categories and reasons also provide the framework for the organization of the paper.

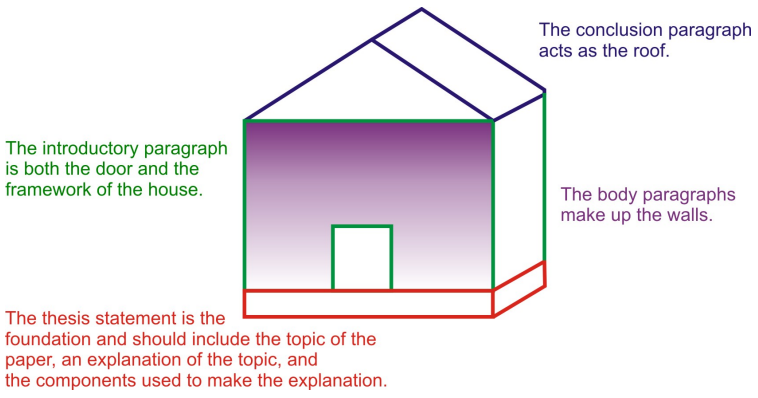
The conclusion paragraph acts as the roof.
The introductory paragraph is both the door and the framework of the house.
The body paragraphs make up the walls.
The thesis statement is the foundation and should include the topic of the paper, an explanation of the topic, and the components used to make the explanation.

Figure 1.1: Components of the expository essay as the parts of a house.

Much like the categories are essential to clarifying the topic, organization is the key to any well-developed essay. When composing your essay, think of its organization as a house, with each component of an essay representing a major part of a house. Just as the foundation provides support on which a house can be built,

a thesis represents the foundation upon which to build an essay. The introductory paragraph then functions as both the door and framework for an expository essay. Like a house door, the introductory paragraph must allow the reader to enter into the essay. Additionally, just as walls are built upon the framework of a house, the body paragraphs of an essay are organized around the framework, or organizational scheme, presented in the introductory paragraph. The body paragraphs, much like the walls of a house, must be firm, strong, and complete. Also, there must always be as many body paragraphs as the framework of the introductory paragraph indicates otherwise your essay will resemble a house that is missing a wall. Finally, an essay must include a conclusion paragraph that tops off the essay much like a roof completes a house. As the roof cements the structure of the house and helps hold the walls in place, the conclusion paragraph must reiterate the points within your body paragraphs and complete an essay.

Although the overall organization of an expository essay is important, you must also understand the organization of each component (the introductory, body, and conclusion paragraphs) of your essay. The chart below identifies the essential parts of each component of your essay, explaining the necessary information for each type of paragraph. While the guidelines listed below may feel constrictive, they are merely meant to guide you as a writer. Ultimately, the guidelines should help you write more effectively. The more familiar you become with how to organize an essay, the more energy you can focus on your ideas and your writing. As a result, your writing will improve as your ability to organize your ideas improves. Plus, focusing your energy on your argument and ideas rather than the organization makes your job as a writer more exciting and fun.

Introductory Paragraph:

- Introduce the issue.
- Present the topic and its explanation or clarification.
- Provide the categories used to explain the topic.
- Provide the thesis statement.

Body Paragraphs:

- Begin with a topic sentence that reflects an explanation of the paper and the category being discussed in the paragraph.
- Support the argument with useful and informative quotes from sources such as books, journal articles, etc.
- Provide 2-3 quotes that connect the category being discussed to the explanation
- Provide 2-3 sentences explaining each quote more full, drawing stronger connections between the category and the explanation.
- Ensure that the information in these paragraphs is important to the thesis statement.
- End each paragraph with a transition sentence which leads into the next body paragraph.

Concluding Paragraph:

- Begin with a topic sentence that reflects the argument of the thesis statement.
- Briefly summarize the main points of the paper.
- Provide a strong and effective close for the paper.

Introductory Paragraphs

A strong introductory paragraph is crucial to the development of an effective expository essay. Unlike an argumentative essay which takes a stand or forms an opinion about a subject, an expository essay is used when the writer wishes to explain or clarify a topic to the reader. In order to properly explain a topic, an expository essay breaks the topic being addressed into parts, explains each component in relation to the whole, and uses each component to justify the explanation of the topic. Thus when writing an introductory paragraph, it is crucial to include the explanation or clarification of the topic and the categories or components used to produce this explanation.

Introductory Paragraph:

- Introduce the issue.
- Present the topic and its explanation or clarification.
- Provide the categories used to explain the topic.
- Provide the thesis statement.

Since the success of the paper rests on the introductory paragraph, it is important to understand its essential components. Usually, expository papers fail to provide a clear explanation not because the writer's lacks explanations or clarifications but rather because the explanations are not properly organized and identified in the introductory paragraph. One of the most important jobs of an introductory paragraph is that it introduces the topic or issue. Most explanations cannot be clarified without at least some background information. Thus, it is essential to provide a foundation for your topic before you begin explaining your topic. For instance, if you wanted to explain what happened at the first Olympic Games, your introductory paragraph would first need to provide background information about how the first games happened. In doing so, you ensure that your audience is as informed about your topic as you are, and thus you make it easier for your audience to understand your explanation.

Below is a table describing and explaining the main jobs of the introductory paragraph.

Introductory paragraphs introduce the topic and suggest why it is important.

Example: *An analysis of the essay exam results of the new English class shows that the new class format promotes close reading and better essay organization.*

This sentence tells the reader both that the topic of the paper will be the benefits of the new English class and that the significance of these benefits is the improvement of close reading and essay organization.

Introductory paragraphs outline the structure of the paper and highlight the main ideas.

Example: *Considering the results of the High School Exit Exam, it is apparent that school curriculum is not properly addressing basic math skills such as fractions, percentages, and long division.*

This sentence indicates that main ideas (fractions, percentages, and long division) of the essay and indicates the order in which they will be presented in the body paragraphs.

Introductory paragraphs state the thesis.

Example: *California high schools will require all students to take a resume and cover letter writing workshop in order to better prepare them for employment.*

This thesis statement indicates the explanation of the paper.

In addition to introducing the topic of your paper, your introductory paragraph also needs to introduce each of the arguments you will cover in your body paragraphs. By providing your audience with an idea of the points or arguments you will make later in your paper, your introductory paragraph serves as a guide map, not only for your audience but also for you. Including your main sub-points in your introduction not only allows your audience to understand where your essay is headed but also helps you as a writer remember how you want to organize your paper. This is especially helpful if you are not writing your essay in one sitting as it allows you to leave and return to your essay without forgetting all of the important points you wanted to make.

Table 1.1:

Things to always do	**Things to never do**
• Capture the interest of your reader. • Introduce the issue to the reader. • State the problem simply. • Write in an intelligible, concise manner. • Refute any counterpoints. • State the thesis, preferably in one arguable statement. • Provide each of the arguments that will be presented in each of the body paragraphs.	• Apologize: Do not suggest that you are unfamiliar with the topic. **Example:** "*I cannot be certain, but...*" • Use sweeping generalizations. **Example:** "*All men like football...*" • Use a dictionary definition. **Example:** "*According to the dictionary, a humble person is...*" • Announce your intentions: Do not directly state what you will be writing about. **Example:** "*In the paper I will...*"

Most importantly, when writing an introductory paragraph, it is essential to remember that you must capture the interest of your reader. Thus, it is your job as the writer to make the introduction entertaining or intriguing. In order to do so, consider using a quotation, a surprising or interesting fact, an anecdote, or a humorous story. While the quotation, story, or fact you include must be relevant to your paper, placing one of these at the beginning of your introduction helps you not only capture the attention or the reader but also introduce your topic and argument, making your introduction interesting to your audience and useful for your argument and essay.

Body Paragraphs

In an expository essay the body paragraphs are where the writer has the opportunity to explain or clarify his or her viewpoint. By the conclusion paragraph, the writer should adequately clarify the topic for the reader. Regardless of a strong thesis statement that properly indicates the major sub-topics of the essay, papers with weak body paragraphs fail to properly explain the topic and indicate why it is important. Body paragraphs of an expository essay are weak when no examples are used to help illuminate the topic being discussed or when they are poorly organized. Occasionally, body paragraphs are also weak because the

quotes used complicate from rather than simplify the explanation. Thus, it is essential to use appropriate support and to adequately explain your support within your body paragraphs.

In order to create a body paragraph that is properly supported and explained, it is important to understand the components that make up a strong body paragraph. The bullet points below indicate the essential components of a well-written, well-argued body paragraph.

Body Paragraph Components

- Begin with a topic sentence that reflects the argument of the thesis statement.
- Support the argument with useful and informative quotes from sources such as books, journal articles, expert opinions, etc.
- Provide 1-2 sentences explaining each quote.
- Provide 1-3 sentences that indicate the significance of each quote.
- Ensure that the information provided is relevant to the thesis statement.
- End with a transition sentence which leads into the next body paragraph.

Just as your introduction must introduce the topic of your essay, the first sentence of a body paragraph must introduce the main sub-point for that paragraph. For instance, if you were writing a body paragraph for a paper explaining the factors that led to US involvement in World War II, one body paragraph could discuss the impact of the Great Depression on the decision to enter the war. To do so, you would begin with a topic sentence that explains how the Great Depression encouraged involvement in the war because the war effort would stimulate certain aspects of the economy. Following this sentence, you would go into more detail and explain how the two events are linked. By placing this idea at the beginning of the paragraph, not only does your audience know what the paragraph is explaining, but you can also keep track of your ideas.

Following the topic sentence, you must provide some sort of fact that supports your claim. In the example of the World War II essay, maybe you would provide a quote from a historian or from a prominent history teacher or researcher. After your quote or fact, you must always explain what the quote or fact is saying, stressing what you believe is most important about your fact. It is important to remember that your audience may read a quote and decide it is indicating something entirely different than what you think it is explaining. Or, maybe some or your readers think another aspect of your quote is important. If you do not explain the quote and indicate what portion of it is relevant to your clarification, than your reader may become confused or may be unconvinced of your explanation. Consider the possible interpretations for the statement below.

Example: While the U.S. involvement in World War II was not the major contributor to the ending of the Great Depression, the depression was one of the primary motives for entering the war.

Interestingly, this statement seems to be saying two things at once – that the Great Depression helped spark involvement in the war and that World War II did not end the depression alone. On the one hand, the historian seems to say that the two events are not directly linked. However, on the other hand, the historian also indicates that the two events are linked in that the depression caused U.S. involvement in the war. Because of the tension in this quotation, if you used this quote for your World War II essay, you would need to explain that the significant portion of the quote is the assertion that links the events.

In addition to explaining what this quote is saying, you would also need to indicate why this is important to your explanation. When trying to indicate the significance of a fact, it is essential to try to answer the "so what." Image you have just finished explaining your quote to someone, and they have asked you "so what?" The person does not understand why you have explained this quote, not because you have not

explained the quote well but because you have not told him or her why he or she needs to know what the quote means. This, the answer to the "so what," is the significance of your paper and is essentially your clarification within the body paragraphs. However, it is important to remember that generally a body paragraph will contain more than one quotation or piece of support. Thus, you must repeat the Quotation-Explanation-Significance formula several times within your body paragraph to fully explain the one sub-point indicated in your topic sentence. Below is an example of a properly written body paragraph.

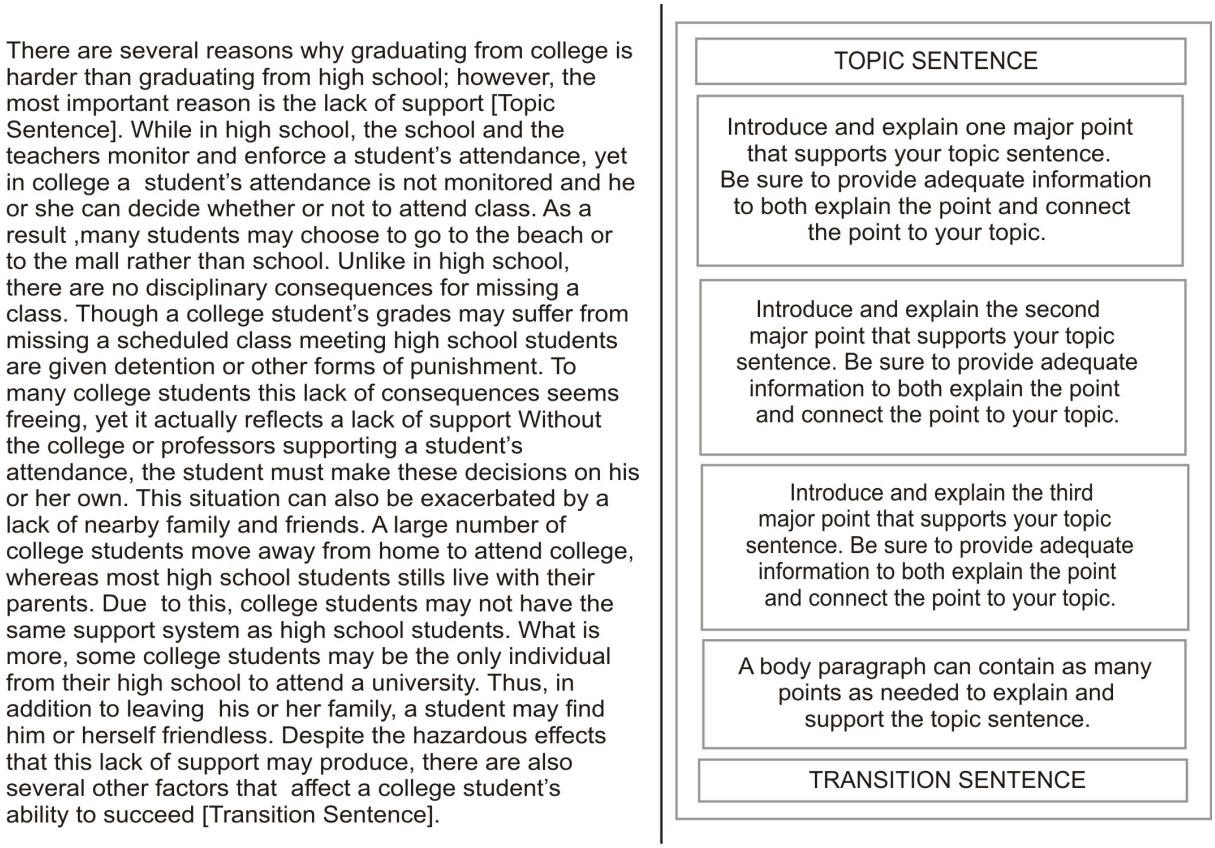
There are several reasons why graduating from college is harder than graduating from high school; however, the most important reason is the lack of support [Topic Sentence]. While in high school, the school and the teachers monitor and enforce a student's attendance, yet in college a student's attendance is not monitored and he or she can decide whether or not to attend class. As a result ,many students may choose to go to the beach or to the mall rather than school. Unlike in high school, there are no disciplinary consequences for missing a class. Though a college student's grades may suffer from missing a scheduled class meeting high school students are given detention or other forms of punishment. To many college students this lack of consequences seems freeing, yet it actually reflects a lack of support Without the college or professors supporting a student's attendance, the student must make these decisions on his or her own. This situation can also be exacerbated by a lack of nearby family and friends. A large number of college students move away from home to attend college, whereas most high school students stills live with their parents. Due to this, college students may not have the same support system as high school students. What is more, some college students may be the only individual from their high school to attend a university. Thus, in addition to leaving his or her family, a student may find him or herself friendless. Despite the hazardous effects that this lack of support may produce, there are also several other factors that affect a college student's ability to succeed [Transition Sentence].
TOPIC SENTENCE
Introduce and explain one major point that supports your topic sentence. Be sure to provide adequate information to both explain the point and connect the point to your topic.
Introduce and explain the second major point that supports your topic sentence. Be sure to provide adequate information to both explain the point and connect the point to your topic.
Introduce and explain the third major point that supports your topic sentence. Be sure to provide adequate information to both explain the point and connect the point to your topic.
A body paragraph can contain as many points as needed to explain and support the topic sentence.
TRANSITION SENTENCE

Figure 1.2: Example of an expository body paragraph paired with an explanation of its parts.

Conclusion Paragraph

The conclusion paragraph of an expository essay is an author's last chance to create a good impression. Hence, it is important to restate the thesis statement at the beginning of the paragraph in order to remind the reader of your topic and explanation. Since it is at the end of the paper, the conclusion paragraph also should add a sense of closure and finality to the clarification of the paper. It is important to re-emphasize the main idea without being repetitive or introducing an entirely new idea or subtopic. While you can conclude your conclusion paragraph by suggesting a topic for further research or investigation, do not make this question the focus of the paragraph. Thus, you should briefly and concisely reiterate the strongest clarifications of the paper, reminding the reader of the validity of your thesis, or explanation, and bringing closure to your paper.

Concluding Paragraph:

- Begin with a topic sentence that reflects the argument of the thesis statement.
- Briefly summarize the main points of the paper.
- Provide a strong and effective close for the paper.

Table 1.2:

Things to always do	Things to never do
• Stress the importance of the thesis. • Include a brief summary of the main idea. • Be concise. • Provide a sense of closure.	• Rework your introduction or thesis statement. • Use overused phrases. 1. **Example:** "*In summary...*" or "*In conclusion...*" • Announce what you have written in the body of the essay 1. **Example:** "*In this paper I have emphasized the importance of...*" • Apologize. 1. **Example:** "*Although I do not have all the answers...*" • Make absolute claims. 1. **Example:** "*This proves that the government should...*"

You may feel that the conclusion paragraph is redundant or unnecessary; However, do not forget that this is your last chance to explain the significance of your argument to your audience. Just as your body paragraphs strive to present the significance of each fact or quote you use, your conclusion paragraph should sum up the significance of your argument. Thus, you should consider making a bold statement in your concluding paragraph by evoking a vivid image, suggesting results or consequences related to your argument, or ending with a warning. Through using these components, you not only make your conclusion paragraph more exciting, but you also make your essay, and your argument, more important.

Review Questions

1. What are three of the main purposes of an introductory paragraph?
2. What should you never do in an introductory paragraph?
3. How should you refute counterpoints?
4. What is the formula for a well-argued body paragraph?

5. What should you include in a conclusion paragraph? What should never include in a conclusion paragraph?

Points to Consider

1. Write an expository essay about your favorite movie or book, paying special attention to why a certain book or movie is your favorite. Be sure to adequately summarize the movie or book in order to provide a concise and comprehensible explanation. Additionally, be sure to use concrete details and examples to explain why you enjoy the book or movie you are writing about. Simply summarizing the plot will not explain to the reader why the book or movie is entertaining to you.
2. Write an expository essay about a historical event, indicating at least three factors that contributed to its development. For instance, you could discuss how factors, such as World War I, led to the Women's Suffrage Movement. A factor could be an event, an individual, or a movement that is historically significant. In order to properly show how certain factors caused or contributed to a specific event, you must clarify both the factors and the event itself.

Chapter 2

Parts of Speech

2.1 Parts of Speech

Lesson Objectives

- Identify the basic parts of speech: noun, adjective, verb, and adverb.
- Distinguish between words and phrases.
- Distinguish between the form and the function of a word or phrase.

Basic Parts of Speech

Parts of speech are the basic words that make up phrases, clauses and sentences. The four basic parts of speech—nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs—make up over 95% of all words in the English language.

For definitions and examples of **phrases** and **clauses**, see Chapter 12, lessons 1 and 2.

Noun

We traditionally define a noun as any word that represents a person, place, or thing. However, nouns often do not function on their own; they work with attendant **determiners** and **adjectives** to form **noun phrases**. We can also distinguish further between abstract nouns and **proper nouns**, those that represent a specific person, historical event, or other name. Proper nouns are always capitalized.

Example 1 - Mary jogged.

"Mary" is a **proper noun** that functions as the subject of the sentence.

Example 2 - That tall woman jogged.

"Woman" is a noun, but the word also has the **determiner** "that" and the adjective "tall" preceding it. All three words working together make up the **noun phrase** that functions as the subject of the sentence.

Adjective

Adjectives modify or describe nouns. Many adjectives have characteristic endings such as *–ous* (*delicious*), *-ish* (*waspish*), *-ful* (*beautiful*), and *–ary* (*wary*). You can modify adjectives using **qualifiers** (*very, extremely*) and comparative words (*more, most, less, least*). Just as with nouns, adjectives and attendant

modifiers form **adjective phrases**.

Examples 1 - I need to find an affordable car.

The adjective "affordable" is modifying the noun "car."

Example 2 - Ms. Chu needs to find a more reliable car.

Here the adjective "reliable" is preceded by the comparative word "more." Both of these words make up the **adjective phrase** modifying the noun "car."

Verb

Verbs are defined as action words, but may also introduce states or descriptions. They are often marked by **auxiliaries** (*will, shall*). A verb and its attendant auxiliaries make up a **verb phrase**. All verbs require a **subject**, which in most consists of who or what is conducting the action. Often in sentences that command or suggest to listener, the subject "you" will be omitted. Many verbs require an **object** (who or what is receiving the action).

Example 1 - Robert dropped the ball during the final seconds of the game.

The verb of this sentence is "dropped." The subject of the verb is the noun "Robert" and the object is the noun "ball."

Example 2 - Go to my office and fetch my keys.

The subject of these verbs is the implied "you," which is omitted in commands or requests.

Example 3 - I could finish my essay by eight o'clock tonight.

The verb "finished" is attended by the **auxiliary** "could." Both words make up the verb phrase.

Here is a list of **auxiliaries** that can attend a verb. *Must* and *Ought to* have no past form. Auxiliaries are defined as part of the verb, not as a separate adverb.

Present	Will	Shall	Can	May	Must	Ought to
Past	Would	Should	Could	Might		

Adverb

Adverbs act as modifiers of verbs, describing their time, place, reason, or manner. Like adjectives, adverbs can be qualified (*very, quite*). Many (but not all) adverbs end with *–ly* (*slowly, apparently, strangely*).

Example 1 - Pierre quickly ran through the main points of his argument.

The adverb "quickly" is modifying the verb "ran."

Example 2 - She threw down the gauntlet quite suddenly.

The adverb "suddenly" is being qualified by the word "quite." This **adverb phrase** modifies the verb "threw."

Form Versus Function

In Lesson 1, we defined the different parts of speech by their form; we looked at the basic meaning of words while ignoring how they might be working within a sentence. However, in order to understand how the parts of speech work grammatically in sentences, we must use a functional terminology.

Remember, **form** refers to the part of speech of a word as it is defined, while **function** refers to how the word works in a sentence. The form of a word is static, whereas its function might change from sentence to sentence.

Example 1 - Eating an apple a day can keep the doctor away, or so they say.

In this sentence, the word "eating," which is formally defined as a verb, functions nominally (as if it were a noun) because it is the **subject** of the sentence.

Example 2 - Is this the picture of Jose's mother?

By making "Jose" (formally a proper noun) possessive, we are using it as a modifier to describe whose mother we are talking about. Therefore, it is functioning adjectivally.

Example 3 - Her truck, a red Chevy, was parked around the back of the house.

Here we are using the noun phrase adjectivally to describe the noun "truck."

Review Questions

Identify the nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs in each sentence. Remember that any part of speech can come in the form of a phrase as well, so make sure to mark the entire phrase.

1. Should I take that plastic bottle out of the fridge?
2. Mr. Gonzalez quickly reprimanded the student for using his cell phone in class.
3. Interestingly, there was a strange inscription on the bottom of the clay pot.
4. During the weekends, she volunteers at the local homeless shelter.
5. The balcony collapsed because of a poorly manufactured steel I-beam.

Chapter 3

Parts of the Sentence

3.1 Parts of the Sentence

Lesson Objectives

- Identify independent and dependent clauses.
- Identify prepositions and prepositional phrases.
- Distinguish between participle phrases and gerund phrases.
- Identify infinitives and infinitive phrases.

The Clause

A clause is any group of words that contains both a subject and a verb. The subject can be a simple noun, a group of words known as a phrase (see below), or another clause. Clauses can be split into two categories: independent and dependent clauses.

Independent Clause

The independent clause can always stand on its own as a complete sentence; it does not rely on other clauses or phrases for its meaning. A sentence may contain more than one independent clause, but each independent clause can always be separated into a separate complete sentence.

Example 1 - Hand me that socket wrench.

Here a single independent clause is used as a complete sentence. The verb in this clause is *hand*. The subject is the implied **pronoun** *you*, which is usually omitted in orders or requests.

Example 2 - Tell my sister that I miss her; tell my brother that it gets much easier.

Here two related independent clauses are joined together with a semicolon to form a **compound sentence**, which is defined as any sentence that has more than one independent clause.

Example 3 - She is going to be a schoolteacher because she believes education is the most fundamental pillar of the republic.

This sentence is made up of an independent clause and a subordinate (dependent) clause. A sentence with one independent clause and one or more dependent clause is called a **complex sentence.**

Example 4 - This peach is way beyond ripe, and I refuse to pay for it.

This sentence consists of two independent clauses joined by a **coordinating conjunction.**

For a definition and complete list of **coordinating conjunctions,** see Chapter 12, Lesson 1.

Dependent Clause

Like the independent clause, the dependent clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb. However, the dependent clause relies on an independent clause to complete its meaning.

Example 1 - If you chase two rabbits, you will lose them both.

The first clause is dependent because it begins with "if," which is classified as a **subordinating conjunction**. All clauses that *begin* with **subordinating conjunctions** are considered dependent. Notice that the dependent clause still contains both a subject and a verb.

Example 2 - Janis spent her vacation in Goa, which is on the west coast of the Indian subcontinent.

Here the dependent clause is being used like one big adjective to modify or describe "Goa." The dependent clause begins with the **relative pronoun** "which," which stands in for "Goa" as the subject of the clause.

Here is a list of common **subordinating conjunctions.** Remember that any clause beginning with these words is considered dependent and cannot stand on its own as a complete sentence.

Table 3.1:

After	How	Till	Although
If	Unless	As	Though
Until	As if	In order that	When
As long as	Lest	Whenever	As much as
Now that	Where	Before	Wherever
Since	While	Because	So that

Review Questions

Identify the clause(s) in each example sentence. Mark each clause as either an independent clause (IC) or dependent clause (DC).

1. There are a thousand little restaurants tucked into the corners, basements, and alleyways of Manhattan, and many of them are worth discovering.
2. My uncle was not dull: he was uncommonly clever.
3. If you speak the truth, have a foot in the stirrup.
4. Take your shoes off before you walk on my new carpet.
5. Is Jason really moving to Portland to look for a job after he graduates?

The Phrase

A phrase is defined as any word or group of words, excluding clauses, that functions as a unit within a sentence. In other words, a phrase can be any group of words that is missing either a subject or a verb. There are many different types of phrases; here we will outline those more commonly seen in English sentences.

Prepositional Phrase

Any phrase (with a handful of exceptions) that begins with a preposition is considered a **prepositional phrase.** There are dozens of different prepositions; the following is a list of common prepositions.

Table 3.2:

Aboard	Below	In	Since	About	Beneath	Into
Through	Above	Beside	Like	Throughout	Across	Between
Near	Till	After	Beyond	Of	To	Against
But	Off	Toward	Along	By	On	Under
Amid	Concerning	Onto	Underneath	Among	Despite	Out
Until	Around	Down	Outside	Up	As	During
Over	Upon	At	Except	Past	With	Atop
For	Per	Within	Before	From	Regarding	Without

Example 1 - After swimming in the ocean, Marco jumped in the pool.

There are three prepositional phrases in this sentence; the second, "in the ocean," is contained within the first. Remember that a preposition will always be modifying either a noun or a verb. All three, in this case, are adverbial: "after swimming" is describing when Marco jumped, while "in the pool" is describing where.

Example 2 - Our company now imports semiconductors from the Republic of China.

Here is an example of two prepositional phrases acting adjectivally. "From" is telling us the origin of the semiconductors (though, in this case, it could also be functioning adverbially—that is, describing the verb "imports"), while "of" tells us which republic we're talking about.

Participial Phrase

A participle is defined as any verb that ends with *-ing* or *-ed* (with regular verbs) and functions as either an adjective or adverb. The participle may also have an **object** (something receiving the action of the verb) after it, causing it to become a **participle phrase.**

Example 1 - Skipping along the forested path, the dwarfs whistled in a merry chorus.

Here the participle phrase is modifying the subject "dwarfs." Notice that you can move the participial phrase to different parts of the sentence. It could go either after the subject or at the end of the sentence.

Example 2 - The kids went bounding down the stairs.

The participial phrase is acting adverbially in this sentence. In other words, the participle is modifying the verb "went."

Gerund Phrase

The gerund is defined as any *-ing* verb that functions as a noun. In other words, you can place a gerund phrase in any place in the sentence where a noun could normally function. When the gerund verb has an attendant object or modifiers, we describe it as a **gerund phrase.**

Example 1 - For thirty years, Marcel has started every morning by swimming around the bay.

This gerund phrase is functioning as the object of the preposition "by."

Example 2 - Snooping around Facebook is the new way to vet potential employees.

The gerund phrase here is functioning as the subject of the sentence.

Infinitive Phrase

The infinitive is defined as the base (present tense) form of a verb preceded by the word *to*. An **infinitive phrase** can function nominally (as a noun), adverbially, or adjectively.

1. To talk about poll numbers at this stage of the election is simply counterproductive.

The infinitive phrase is functioning as a noun by being the subject of the sentence. Notice that there are two **prepositional phrases** proceeding the infinitive verb: "about poll numbers" and "at this stage of the election." Because these phrases are both modifying the infinitive verb, we consider them part of the infinitive phrase.

2. To ensure a full refund, you must also bring your receipt.

The infinitive phrase is functioning as an adverb modifying the main verb "bring." Notice that when the infinitive is positioned at the beginning of the sentence and is acting as an adverb (not as the subject), we place a comma after it.

3. A fistfight is no way to resolve an argument.

The infinitive phrase is functioning as an adjective modifying the noun "way."

Review Questions

Underline and identify the participial, prepositional, gerund, or infinitive phrase(s) in each sentence.

1. On Thursday I drove up north to move a couch for a friend.
2. If your shoes have a lot of surface area, hiking through a snow drift gets a lot easier.
3. Already exhausted by the second quarter, we were no match for the division champions.
4. That award, offered once a year to only one teacher in the entire state, is quite an honor to win.
5. Hoping against all hope that the balding tires would hold and the rusting fuel pump would continue to work, I loaded up all of the possessions that would fit, discarded the rest in a dumpster behind a truck stop, and set out to cross the country.